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FBI FOR INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS
JAKARTA FOR LEGATT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2/14/2018

TAGS: KJUS KCRM ASEC PREL

SUBJECT: TIMOR-LESTE ACTING PRESIDENT REQUESTS SUPPORT FOR INQUIRY
INTO ATTACKS

REF: A) DILI 40, B) DILI 45 (NOTAL)

CLASSIFIED BY: Hans Klemm, Ambassador, EXEC, State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Action requested -- see Para 6 below.

¶2. (C) The Ambassador met Friday 14 with the Speaker of the National Parliament and Acting President Fernando LaSama de Araujo. LaSama, who had just returned February 13 from Portugal due to the tragic events of February 11 in Dili, told the Ambassador of his shock at first hearing of the attempted assassination of the President and Prime Minister. He expressed concern that the ongoing criminal investigation of the two attacks would not lead to strong criminal cases being brought against the perpetrators. The President asked whether the U.S. could provide assistance to the ongoing criminal investigations so that the Timor-Leste Prosecutor General would be able to bring the strongest possible cases forward against the perpetrators. The President noted that he had not secured approval for this request from other key leaders within the government, including the Prosecutor General, but wanted to know what resources the U.S. might provide if a formal request were made. He offered to submit a written request if necessary. The Ambassador immediately agreed to contact Washington agencies to see what type of investigatory assistance might be provided and when.

¶3. (C) As Washington agencies are aware, on February 11 the President and Prime Minister were attacked in two separate incidents by individuals led by rebel military officer Alfredo Reinado. President Ramos Horta was seriously wounded and remains in a Darwin, Australia hospital. Two of the attackers, including the ringleader Alfredo Reinado, were killed at the scene of the President's shooting. The facts of both incidents, including the sequence of events, motives, and identity of the perpetrators, are publicly disputed and have become the creative fodder for various conspiracies that could contribute to political instability.

¶4. (C) The criminal investigation is currently being conducted by officers assigned to the National Investigation Center from UN police forces and the National Police of Timor-Leste. The investigation is led by the Timor-Leste Prosecutor General. The UNPOL Commander told the Ambassador this afternoon that evidence collected to date includes ballistics and weapons evidence; documents, SIM cards and mobile phones taken from those killed at the scene; as well as verbal evidence taken from 15 witnesses to the events. The Deputy Prosecutor General told the embassy today that warrants for the arrest of several individuals would be issued very shortly and more could follow.

¶5. (C) Senior Timor-Leste security officials in the past have openly acknowledged to us that the forensic and investigatory capabilities of their national police forces are low. The presence of UNPOL officers should boost the quality of the investigation, but this is not guaranteed. U.S. assistance, therefore, could play a critical role in establishing the facts and developing strong cases against those that committed crimes on February 11. The Ambassador informed Atul Khare, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Timor, of President Lasama's request. Khare enthusiastically welcomed the possible provision of U.S. support for the investigation.

¶6. (C) Action requested: Embassy Dili urgently requests guidance on what, if any, investigatory assistance might be offered by the FBI or other USG agencies to support the ongoing investigation of the February 11 attacks on President Horta and Prime Minister Gusamo. As discussed above, Acting President Lasama, at this point, only requests information regarding what type of assistance might be provided. We anticipate, however, if the FBI or other agencies were able to assist in the investigation, a formal Timor-Leste request for assistance would follow promptly. Given the gravity of the incidents of February 11 and the desirability of a quick and professional investigation of those events, U.S. assistance to the investigation could be of enormous benefit.

KLEMM